REMARKS

Claims 1-28 are pending in this application. Claims 29-36 are withdrawn.

Claims 1-3, 8-10 have been amended to overcome the objections noted at pages 2-3 of the Office Action.

Additionally, claims 1, 8- 9, 15, 17, 20-22, 26-27 have been amended to clarify that the sensitive and/or configuration information comprises information 1) that is necessary for authorized network access; and 2) that its absence from the network device disables the device and/or renders it inoperative, at least in part; 3) that it is downloaded to the device when the device is attached to the network; and 4) that it is removed from the device when the device is disconnected from the network. The amendments to claim 1, shown below, are representative:

1.   A system for protecting sensitive information in a network

comprising:

a network component for storing the—sensitive information necessary for authorized network access; and

a network device, attachable to the network, that lacks the sensitive information necessary for authorized network access and is inoperative, at least in part, until the sensitive information is stored therein;

wherein, when the network device is attached to the network, the sensitive information necessary for authorized network access is downloaded from the network component and stored in the network device so that the network device becomes operational;

wherein, when the network device is disconnected from the network, the sensitive information necessary for authorized network access is erased from the network device, thereby making the network device inoperative at least in part and removing the sensitive information necessary for authorized network access from the network device.

These amendments are supported, for example, at page 2, lines 10-13, 21-23; page 3, lines 1-3, 24-25; page 5, lines 13-15; page 6, lines 19-21, of the specification.

For all the rejections, the Examiner considers the operational program code, referred to in par. 76 of Guy, the base reference, to meet the claimed sensitive and/or configuration information, but that conclusion is incorrect, because this operational program code does not satisfy property two, requiring that removal of the sensitive and/or confidential information from the device disables it and/or renders it inoperative, at least in part. That does not occur in Guy because an access point 22, after removal of this operational program code, is still hard-wired or "hard-programmed" with the access point identification held by ID component 45. (*See* Guy, par. 74). Armed with this access point identification, an access point 22 can readily obtain the operational program code from the network through a simple two –step sequence. (*See* Guy, par. 75). In the first step, generic, start-up program code is downloaded to the device and executed, causing the processor in the device to read the value of ID component 45, and report it back to the network. (*Id.*) In the second step, based on this information, the network determines the version of the operational program code appropriate for the access point 22, and downloads it to the device. (*Id.*). Thus, it cannot be said that the removal of the operational program code from the device "disables" it or render it "inoperative."

And, of course, the access point identification as held in the ID component 45 does not meet properties three and four, the requirement that the information be downloaded to a device when the device is attached to the network, and the requirement that removal of the information from the device occur when the device is disconnected from the network. Neither of these requirements is met because the access point information is hard-wired or "hard-programmed" into the ID component 45 within the device. (*See* Guy, par. 74).

None of the secondary references cited in the Office Action, Gerba, Loison, or Nessett, fill this gap in teaching of Guy. Accordingly, claims 1-25 are patentable over these references, considered singly or in combination.

For all the foregoing reasons, the Examiner is earnestly solicited to allow all claims and pass this application to issuance. Early notification of allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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